

Broome County Office for Aging



*Ideas and Information for
People Caring for Others*

Caregiver Corner

**May & June
2015**

607- 778-2411

www.gobroomecounty.com/senior

Events for Caregivers

Advanced Care Planning & LTC Ombudsman Program

Date: **Tuesday, May 5th**
Time: 1:00-2:30 pm
Place: Broome County Public Library, Exhibit Room – 185 Court Street, Binghamton
Presenter: Rebecca Bradley, Program Coordinator for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and APEL (Advanced Care Planning for End of Life)

Rebecca Bradley will present on behalf of Action for Older Persons. She will provide information about health care proxies and living wills. She will also help attendees understand the Ombudsman Program and how it can assist you and your loved one. Register by calling the Office for Aging at 778-2411.

How the Elder Services Center at B.U. Can Assist You

Date: **Tuesday, June 9th**
Time: 1:30-2:30 PM
Place: Broome West Senior Center – 2801 Wayne Street, Endwell
Presenter: Rene Conklin, Binghamton University Elder Services Center Clinic and Education Coordinator

This presentation will educate caregivers about the Binghamton University Elder Services Center and the different services they provide. Rene will also discuss Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, as well as ways caregivers can manage the problems associated with these ailments. Register by calling the Office for Aging at 778-2411.

Caregiver Chat Groups

These informal chats are open to caregivers of any age.



Place: **Stay Healthy Center (close to Sears)**
Oakdale Mall, Johnson City, NY

Date: Monday, May 4th
Monday, June 1st

Time: 1:00-2:30 PM

Place: **Broome West Senior Center**
2801 Wayne Street, Endwell, NY
Phone: 785-3427

Date: Wednesday, May 20th
Wednesday, June 17th

Time: 9:30-11:00 AM

Additional support and chat groups are available throughout the county. Call Caregiver Services at 778-2411 for more information.

We Want to Hear From You!

Caregiver Services would like to make sure that we are providing you with the most accurate and up-to-date information to help you in your caregiving role.



Are there any speakers you would like to hear from in the coming months? Do any topics come to mind you'd like to know more about?

If you have ideas, please call the Office for Aging at 778-2411 and ask to speak with Judy Bobinski, or email: jbobinski@co.broome.ny.us and give us your input. All ideas are welcome.



Preparing for an Emergency

Caregivers want the best for their loved ones, but their busy lives often prevent them from preparing for unforeseen circumstances.

Chemical spills, fires, power outages, tornadoes, and snowstorms are just a few examples of situations that may affect you and your loved one's daily activities. By having a plan in advance and supplies on hand, you will feel safer knowing that your loved one is prepared for an emergency.

Decide how you will prepare and respond to an emergency. Choose a local and out-of-area emergency contact for your loved one. Write down this information and post it on the refrigerator or another conspicuous place that your loved one or emergency responders can easily see. Other information to include is their date of birth, medications they take, and other important medical information. Also, make sure that they have filled out health care proxy and advance directives paperwork.

Next, make sure your loved one's home is ready for an emergency. Install smoke detectors (change the batteries two times each year) and purchase a fire extinguisher. Install a landline phone; keep in mind that during a power outage, a cordless phone will not work. Make a kit that includes essential supplies if it is unsafe to leave the house.

The kit should include a radio, flashlight, batteries, non-perishable food, paper products, a can opener, important phone numbers, an extra pair of glasses, extra medications, and other items you think are necessary. Keep a small amount of cash or traveler's checks in the kit just in case your loved one needs to evacuate.

When it is not safe to stay home, radio stations will alert you to shelter locations. Some shelters are specifically set up for those with medical needs or those with pets. If your loved one lives in a facility, be sure you know the facility's emergency preparedness plan.

This is basic information to get you started preparing for an emergency. It is up to you and your loved one to be ready for the unexpected. For more

information, contact the American Red Cross or go to www.redcross.org.

Caregiver Question & Answer

Question: I've been helping my father for the last few years since my mother passed away. Usually I buy groceries and help him with chores around the house.



Recently his needs have been changing... his food has been going to waste, and he hasn't been getting out as much as he used to. I'm not sure what more I can do - I already spend as much time with him as my schedule allows. Do you have any suggestions?

Answer: Based on your description of your father's issues, it doesn't sound like he's ready for assisted living or any other type of skilled nursing facility. Below I've listed a number of signs that may indicate your father could benefit from in-home care. If you find that the changes he's going through fall into the some of the listed categories, you should consider more direct care for your father.

Situations that may require in-home help include recent accidents, slow recovery from illnesses or injuries, worsening chronic health conditions, and increasing difficulty in managing activities associated with daily functioning. Call the Office for Aging for a list of options for in-home services: 778 – 2411.

Signs Related to Decreased Physical Wellbeing

Adapted from Today's Caregiver. Copyright 2015.

- ☒ Noticeable weight loss or weight gain
- ☒ Increased frailty
- ☒ Changes in overall outward appearance

Social Signs:

- ☒ No active friendships
- ☒ Cutting back on activities/interests

- ☒ Not leaving home for days
- ☒ No longer checking in regularly

Money Management:

- ☒ Mail piling up
- ☒ Unopened bills or letters

Driving Abilities:

- ☒ Dents and nicks in the car
- ☒ Careless driving
- ☒ Preoccupied driving

Signs in the Kitchen:

- ☒ Stale or expired foods
- ☒ Reliance on microwavable or easily prepared foods

Around the House:

- ☒ Lots of clutter
- ☒ Bathroom grime
- ☒ Tripping hazards
- ☒ Mold/dust accumulation
- ☒ Dying plants
- ☒ Malnourished or not well tended pets

Around the Yard:

- ☒ Newspapers in the bushes
- ☒ Mail piled up in the mailbox
- ☒ Unclipped grass
- ☒ Snow not shoveled

If any of these signs stick out to you, it could be time to sit down and have a conversation with your loved one about getting more assistance; it is not a decision you are expected to make alone.

Also consider your loved one's emotional state. It can be easy to feel that we are doing everything possible

for our loved ones, but if they have anxiety or loneliness in addition to any of the above signs, it could also be a good idea to get them more help. Having someone around other than you can help to combat loneliness, which will allow them to remain at home for as long as possible.



I am a Caregiver

By Lin M. Watkins

I am a caregiver,
It's what I do.
24/7, I'm here for you.

And most of the time
We do just fine
But once in a while,
I need my own time.

And when I take
That necessary break
I've got to remember
It's for both our sake

I can't take care of you
Unless I take care of me
So I work very hard
At being guilt-free

I'll always be here for you,
So don't you fret
Together we're making
Memories of us, I'll never forget.

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The Caregiver Services Program is supported by a grant from U.S Administration on Aging, New York State Office for Aging and Broome County. Contributions are accepted to help support this program. No one is denied service because of an inability to contribute and all contributions are confidential.

To make a contribution, please send checks or money orders to Broome County Office for Aging, PO Box 1766, Binghamton, NY 13902.

Caregiver Corner

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If you prefer to read the electronic version, we'd be glad to e-mail you a reminder when new issues are posted; we'll take you off the mailing list for the paper copies. Let us know by emailing:

ofa@co.broome.ny.us

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If you no longer want a paper copy of Caregiver Corner mailed to you, please contact Erin by phone: 778-2411 or by email: eehn@co.broome.ny.us and ask to be taken off the mailing list.

Thank you!